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141159Z Mar 05

UNCLAS LILONGWE 000232

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SUBJECT: CHILD MARRIAGE IN MALAWI

REF: STATE 036341

¶1. Post provides the following information regarding child marriage in Malawi. Responses below are keyed to reftel paragraph 6.

¶A. Section 22 Subsection 6 of the Constitution of Malawi states that the legal age for marriage in Malawi is 18. This law applies to both girls and boys. The constitution also states "for persons between the ages 15 and 18 years a marriage shall only be entered into with the consent of their parents or guardians."

¶B. Underage marriage is not a significant problem, either among the population at large or within one or more minority groups in Malawi. Statistics are not available. The Ministry of Gender, Child Welfare and Community Services indicated the GOM is not currently focused on the issue of child marriage.

¶C. In Malawi there are no U.S. funded initiatives that specifically aim to reduce the incidence or address the negative affects of child marriage. However, other development initiatives focused on education, health, and economic security may indirectly address the issue.

GILMOUR